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Russian Federation

Agricultural Situation

Dmitry Yanin: Consumer Protection

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Report Highlights:

Dmitry Yanin shares his views on the Russian consumer market. Yanin is currently the Chairman of the Board of the International Consumer Society of Russia, an organization that provides consumers with professional assistance, judicial protection, independent and objective information, consumer alerts, and protection and representation in interaction with businesses.

Includes PSD Changes: No

Includes Trade Matrix: No

Unscheduled Report

Moscow [RS1]

[RS]

Protecting Russian Consumers

Consumer protection and safety in Russia is now being addressed by non-government organizations thanks to the help of Dmitriy Yanin, Chairman of the Board of the International Consumer Society of Russia, an organization that provides consumers with professional assistance, judicial protection, independent and objective information, consumer alerts, and protection and representation in interaction with businesses. Dmitriy Yanin met with ATO Moscow to discuss his organization and career and to give his thoughts on consumer markets in Russia.

Dmitriy Yanin graduated in 1997 from the University of Social Trade in Moscow. He joined the International Consumer Society in 2002 after becoming interested in the expansion of product diversity. He also saw the vital need for consumer protection institutions, which were in their infant stages of development. Regardless of difficulties Yanin faces in providing consumer safety and protection, he remains optimistic because Russian citizens continue to gain financial power and market knowledge.

The International Consumer Society consists of 57 groups of national and regional consumer organizations from six Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries. The regional groups founded the organization shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and it is one of only two consumer unions active in Russia.

Russia's per capita GDP has grown by an average of 6.7 percent annually over the last eight years, fueling consumer demand. "Consumers cannot stop trying new things at the market," Yanin commented. Processed foods are becoming more popular and people are shopping less at local markets where they have traditionally purchased fresh produce, meat, and dairy products. Also, alcohol and tobacco consumption are not decreasing as wealth increases.

As consumption increases rapidly, the array of issues that the Consumer Federation addresses has stretched from illegal banking fees to banned wine imports. One issue that the Consumers Society recently took up is genetically modified organism (GMO) labeling. Currently labeling is required, but there are no explicit regulations describing what constitutes a GMO product label, unlike the EU, which specifies a 0.9% threshold.

The Consumers Society tackles issues as they arise while simultaneously running long-term programs to encourage heightened consumer awareness in a younger generation. For example, an all-Russian Olympics of Consumer Knowledge is held annually, quizzing school children on their knowledge of laws, product selection, service selection, labeling, and rights protection. The winner receives a scholarship to one of Moscow's top business universities.

Funding for the International Consumers Society of Russia comes entirely from international sources. It is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain because of government regulations and decreasing availability from the United States and European Union.